

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

THE U.S. MILITARY AND NGOS: BREAKING DOWN THE BARRIERS

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ABSTRACT

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The United States Pacific Command (USPACOM) achieved great success during the response to the 2004 Pacific Tsunami and at the same time, identified a need to improve Military-Non Governmental Organization (NGO) relationships. After the disaster, military and civilian organizations pledged to improve working relationships by conducting combined disaster relief exercises. The disaster response lessons, however, were not translated into adjustments in the overall Theatre Security Cooperation Plan (TSCP) exercise program. Exercise planners continue to focus scenarios on major combat operations. The 2004 tsunami, along with numerous other natural disasters in the Pacific region, has clearly demonstrated that crisis response in the USPACOM Area of Responsibility, is more likely to involve a response to a complex natural disaster than that of a major combat operation. However, the current USPACOM exercise program is not fully meeting the security cooperation needs of the command because it does not focus commanders on the likely threat of a natural disaster. Furthermore, the exercise program does little to incorporate NGOs into the design or execution of exercises. This paper addresses the importance of aligning the USPACOM Commander's TSCP with a multinational disaster relief exercise that fully incorporates NGOs in planning and execution.

THE U.S. MILITARY AND NGOS: BREAKING DOWN THE BARRIERS

The United States Pacific Command (USPACOM) achieved great success during the response to the 2004 Pacific tsunami, and at the same time, identified a need to improve military-Non Governmental Organization (NGO) relationships. Military forces and NGOs came together at the disaster sites with a common goal of providing emergency relief from a complex natural disaster.¹ Their ability to work together, however, was hampered by a lack of shared understanding of each other's working protocols.² After the 2004 Pacific tsunami, military and civilian organizations pledged to improve working relationships by conducting multinational exercises, exchanging corporate knowledge through an annual disaster relief workshop, and developing of an active subject matter exchange program. The disaster response lessons, however, were not translated into adjustments in the overall Theatre Security Cooperation Plan (TSCP) exercise program.

The 2004 Pacific tsunami, along with numerous other natural disasters in the region, has clearly demonstrated that crisis response in the USPACOM Area of Responsibility (AOR) is more likely to involve a response to a complex natural disaster than that of a major combat operation. The current USPACOM exercise program, however, does not fully meet the security cooperation and engagement needs of the command because it does not focus Joint or Combined Task Force Commanders and their staffs on the most likely threat of a complex natural disaster. Furthermore, the exercise program does little to incorporate NGOs into the design or execution of exercises. This paper addresses the importance of aligning the USPACOM Commander's Theatre Security Cooperation Plan with a multinational disaster relief exercise supplemented with a pre-exercise disaster relief workshop. This paper also highlights the importance of actively engaging and integrating NGOs into the exercise program and recommends a conceptual framework to reshape an existing bilateral exercise into a multinational disaster response exercise.

Security in the Pacific

The Pacific security environment is complex. The USPACOM Area of Responsibility encompasses the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean regions, spans 16 time zones, includes 43 nations, and covers over half the surface of the earth.³ Historical, religious, and cultural differences aggravate tensions throughout the Asia-Pacific region. Challenges that impact the strategic environment range from bordering neighbors coexisting peacefully to ethnic and religious violence, coup d'etats, border disputes, civil upheavals, and terrorist attacks.⁴ Most assessments, however, portray the Pacific region as generally stable with only isolated flash

points of activity.⁵ That said, because of the potential consequences of a major conflict in the region, the focus of USPACOM's contingency planning and exercise efforts is on major force on force combat operations.

Unlike the human environment, the natural environment in the Pacific is quite volatile. The Pacific is an ever-changing region both on land and under the sea. Its northern borders follow the convergence of the Indian and Eurasian Plates, while its southern edge is contained within volcanic arcs and oceanic trenches.⁶ The Pacific region also includes over 75% of the world's active and dormant volcanoes and remains seismically active. Over the last century, the area has experienced 18 earthquakes with magnitudes greater than 6.0. In addition to earthquakes, typhoons also punish the Pacific with damaging winds and sea surges. Over the last decade, 23 major typhoons have caused widespread devastation to Pacific nations. Therefore, with reoccurring major earthquakes and typhoons anticipated for this region, disaster relief contingency planning is a high payoff investment that USPACOM must make in anticipation of large-scale natural disasters.⁷

Historical evidence also shows that natural disaster planning should be a major focus for USPACOM. For example during the past five years, USPACOM has responded to six typhoons, four floods/tidal waves, four major earthquakes, and a devastating mudslide. The death toll of these natural disasters has exceeded 380,000.⁸ In contrast, the Vietnam War was the last time major U.S. forces were committed to combat in the AOR. Moreover, the last major combat operation in the Pacific theater was the Chinese invasion into Vietnam in 1979.⁹ This example illustrates that combat operations in the Pacific, although costly in terms of lives (the Vietnam War cost some 2 million lives, while the Chinese invasion of Vietnam cost approximately 46,000 lives),¹⁰ do not occur with high frequency. Natural disasters, on the other hand, occur frequently and often are extremely devastating.

2004 Pacific Tsunami

The 2004 Pacific tsunami is the perfect example of how devastating a natural disaster can be and why the U.S. military and Pacific region partners must be trained and ready to respond. Spawned by a 9.0 magnitude earthquake, the tsunami on 26 December 2004, was by far the most devastating tsunami in human history and one of the worst natural disasters of the last 100 years. It ravaged over 4,000 miles of coastline in Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and Thailand; killed an estimated quarter of a million people; and over one million more people were displaced.¹¹ Entire communities were swept away, and thousands of people remain unaccounted for. In response to the tsunami, the USPACOM Commander, Admiral Thomas Fargo, immediately began to plan

humanitarian relief operations. Admiral Fargo quickly decided to establish a Joint Task Force (JTF) to bring together participating nations in a multinational effort. The Third Marine Expeditionary Force (III MEF), under the command of Lieutenant General Robert “Rusty” Blackman, was selected to form the core staff for the newly designated JTF-536. Lieutenant General Blackman deployed his command headquarters to Thailand and renamed the JTF-536 to Combined Support Force (CSF) - 536 to better reflect the multinational humanitarian support role of the military effort. Operationally, Lieutenant General Blackman established three subordinate Combined Support Groups (CSGs) in the affected areas of Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and Thailand. Operation Unified Assistance (OUA), as the relief effort was named, became the largest international relief effort in history.¹²

The multinational support efforts of CSF-536 broke new ground simply by the sheer magnitude of the operation. For example, the CSF synchronized the relief efforts of 14 nations and worked around the clock to orchestrate the delivery of food, water, medicine, shelter, and other lifesaving supplies, all in six weeks. The operation was, however, not without its challenges. Doctor Joel Selanikio from the International Red Cross stated:

It took 2-3 weeks for organized attempts to connect military transport with civilian aid recourses. The aid agencies remain starved for information and lacking transportation. The U.S. military, meanwhile, continued to drop water and basic supplies up and down the coast, with apparently little understanding that the civilian relief agencies had a variety of unique and essential recourses, personnel, and experience.¹³

During OUA, a team from USPACOM collected lessons learned at the CSF-536 Headquarters. One lesson highlighted early in the operation was interoperability issues between the U.S. military and civilian relief organizations. For example, the U.S. military and NGOs came together without an understanding of each other’s common operating procedures. NGOs were unfamiliar with the military support structure and inflexible to the bureaucratic demands of the military’s support request process.¹⁴ This friction between military and civilian organizations was most prevalent at the regional Civil Military Operation Centers (CMOCs). The CMOC provides a coordinating point at the field level to share information and identify resource needs. However, the regional CMOCs at the CSGs were quickly inundated by civilian organizations requesting security, air/ground transportation, food, medical supplies, and information on road networks. In particular, CSG-I (Indonesia) identified a barrier in communication between military forces and NGOs.¹⁵ NGOs at the CMOCs were expected to understand military jargon, support processes, and command structures. Additionally, military leaders in the CMOCs spent an inordinate amount of time learning NGOs agendas, capabilities,

and limitations. Moreover, this was the first opportunity in many cases for NGOs to work side by side with military forces during a complex natural disaster relief effort. The lack of shared understanding of strengths, limitations, policies, and procedures caused relief aid to be delayed on many occasions. USPACOM identified that, although the military response in OUA provided a rapid capability to fill gaps in host nation/international relief efforts, there were significant problems in synchronizing, as well as duplication of, the efforts of the host nation, partner nations, and the NGOs. USPACOM also identified the need to strengthen joint, interagency, and multinational civil-military relationships in order to breakdown both real and perceived barriers to responsive disaster relief.¹⁶ Therefore, as a result of lessons learned from the Pacific tsunami of 2004, USPACOM prescribed three steps to prepare for future complex natural disasters:

1. Conduct a multinational exercise focusing on a complex natural disaster,
2. Integrate NGOs into the overall USPACOM exercise program, and
3. Conduct a disaster relief workshop every two years, in conjunction with a disaster relief exercise and incorporate multinational partners, agencies, and NGOs.¹⁷

Unfortunately, more than two years after the tsunami, implementation of these three recommendations has not occurred. These recommendations, however, remain valid and can be easily realized with minimal impact on USPACOM units. First, an existing USPACOM Joint exercise should be reshaped into a disaster relief exercise. Second, NGOs should be invited to participate in the full-life cycle of the disaster relief exercise from the initial planning conference through to execution of the exercise. Third, to ensure both the military and NGOs better understand each other's operational environment and procedures, a Disaster Relief Workshop (DRW) should be hosted by USPACOM prior to the execution of the disaster relief exercise.

The United States Pacific Command Joint/Combined Exercise Program

The first step in the three-step process is to reshape an existing USPACOM Joint exercise. However, in order to make a recommendation on a new natural disaster relief exercise, it is important to understand the USPACOM exercise program. Exercises are the Combatant Commanders' primary means of engaging with regional partners, maintaining joint and multinational combat readiness, fulfilling treaty obligations, and reviewing warplans.¹⁸ Exercises are the mechanism that ties security assistance initiatives, interoperability programs, civic action initiatives, and military/civilian relationships together. They range from full spectrum, force on force combat operations to individual cultural exchange opportunities. Whatever the

size or complexity, exercises are the commanders primary means to bring nations together, train for war, prepare for peace, and assist during times of crisis.

Theater-level Joint exercises are expensive in terms of manpower and money. In today's operating environment, high operational tempo and reduced exercise budgets severely limit the USPACOM command's ability to generate a new Joint exercise. As a result, the current USPACOM exercise program does not have the time or funds available to create a new exercise focusing on a complex natural disaster. Therefore, if a new disaster relief exercise is introduced into the Joint Exercise Program, another exercise must be eliminated to create time and funds to support the exercise. However, cancelling an existing exercise in order to create funding and personnel for a new exercise is a complicated matter because the current exercise program involves long standing relationships with the nations who host the exercises. So, it is no simple matter to eliminate one of the existing Joint exercises.

On the other hand, reshaping an existing exercise into one focused on a complex natural disaster scenario would be an opportunity for service commanders to exercise on the same timeline without incurring additional costs. Additionally, reshaping an existing exercise to reflect a complex natural disaster would provide the venue for incorporating non-military relief organizations into the exercise program, thus improving military and civil relationships.

While a natural disaster is usually scripted into each of the USPACOM Joint exercise scenarios, it is often scheduled for the end of the exercise after all major combat operation training objectives have been met. Disaster relief training is, therefore, considered secondary to major combat operations and is generally the first event dropped from the scenario if time is not available. Consequently, a Joint exercise focused primarily on a complex natural disaster scenario is required to properly train USPACOM forces in disaster response operations.

There are three primary USPACOM directed exercises which could be reshaped into a multinational complex natural disaster exercise. They include: Cobra Gold (CG), Talisman Sabre (TS), and Balikatan (BK). Exercise Cobra Gold is a Thailand hosted exercise, is the premier multinational USPACOM directed exercise in the Pacific theatre, and is focused on Peace Support Operations (PSO).¹⁹ What separates CG from other multinational exercises is the unprecedented access the government of Thailand grants to regional partners. At any one time, seven nations converge on Thailand in an effort to synchronize planning efforts under a common standing operating procedure. The end result is a coalition of trained, multinational partners that are prepared to conduct region wide crisis action planning. CG incorporates a localized natural disaster into the exercise scenario. Military staffs from multiple nations are introduced to the basic planning considerations involved in multinational coordination of disaster

relief efforts. Though CG would provide a solid start point for natural disaster crisis action planning, it is the premier PSO training opportunity in the region. Therefore, CG should remain a multinational PSO exercise because of the importance of PSO combined with the strong backing the exercise receives from the government of Thailand.

The second exercise, Talisman Sabre is a U.S.-Australia bilateral exercise focused on the execution of a short-warning, power projection, forceable entry scenario while conducting combined, high-end combat operations. The exercise improves interoperability at the strategic, operational, and tactical level and is a critical component of the USPACOM Theatre Security Cooperation Plan and joint training strategy. TS supports regional stability and deters aggression by maintaining our military force capability to conduct combined operations. It occurs every two years and is considered the USPACOM Commander's top TSCP exercise.²⁰ TS is the only USPACOM sponsored exercise involving major combat operations and should remain focused on high end combat.

The third and final exercise is Balikatan. It is an annual bilateral exercise between the U.S. and the Philippines which fosters interoperability between the two militaries while enhancing the abilities of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) to conduct maritime and ground defense operations.²¹ Over the past three years, however, BK has been reduced in scope and in 2007 will only include a small staff exercise and a number of humanitarian and civil assistance projects. BK has been reduced for a variety of reasons. Foremost, it does not provide the multinational training venue that USPACOM seeks from its Joint exercises. The AFP has been reluctant to invite regional neighbors to participate in the training. The U.S. has, therefore, reduced its support for current and future BK exercises.

Of the three exercises, BK provides the best venue to conduct a complex natural disaster relief exercise for two reasons. First, more than Thailand or Australia, the Philippines is the most susceptible to large-scale natural disasters. The country lies within the typhoon belt of the Western Pacific and about 19 typhoons strike per year. Additionally, lying on the northwestern fringes of the "Pacific Ring of Fire," the Philippines experiences frequent seismic and volcanic activities. Nearly 20 earthquakes are registered daily in the Philippines, though most are too weak to be felt. The last great earthquake was the 1990 Luzon earthquake. It caused damage in a 20,000 square kilometers area, from northwest of Manila through Central Luzon, and killed approximately 1,600 people.²² This was one of the deadliest earthquakes in Philippine history.

The second reason for nominating BK is tied to the first. Due to the proclivity of natural disasters in the Philippines, the AFP would benefit greatly from an exercise that would better prepare its forces to respond to a natural disaster. Moreover, the Philippine Defense Reform of

2003 directed that the armed forces increase their capability to conduct civil military operations.²³ Simply put, the AFP requires extensive training on integrating civilian organizations with military forces in a common environment. This was demonstrated during the 2006 Leyte Mudslide Disaster when U.S. and Philippine military units encountered challenges working alongside civilian relief organizations. AFP Military commanders were generally unaware of the capabilities and limitations of the various relief organizations and, therefore, were hesitant to include them in their response plan. A revamped BK would have the potential to meet the growing needs of the Philippine government and AFP. While growing in scope from a bilateral combat exercise to a multinational disaster relief exercise, BK would provide a great opportunity to bring together regional nations and relief agencies in an effort to synchronize disaster relief. More importantly, leveraging BK as a multinational disaster relief exercise prepares the AFP, regional partners, and international relief agencies for the next complex natural disaster.

The United States, the government of the Philippines, and regional partner nations also benefit from conducting BK as a multinational complex disaster relief exercise. The shift from a bilateral to a multinational exercise allows regional partners to participate in a disaster relief event just as they would during an actual natural disaster. A multinational exercise, therefore, provides the ideal training environment while preparing responders for a real-world crisis. Partner nations become ready, relevant, and responsive in the disaster relief needs of the region. In addition to multinational benefits, the U.S. also maintains access to strategic areas, and the government of the Philippines continues to benefit from U.S. support for its military programs and humanitarian assistance visits that run concurrently with each exercise. A reshaped BK has the potential to become a capstone disaster relief training event that brings together regional militaries with international relief organizations and reconfirms the U.S. commitment in the region.

An argument against reshaping Exercise Balikatan from a bilateral conventional force on force scenario to a multinational disaster relief scenario is that the proposal will be met with strong resistance from the AFP. The AFP will resist the proposed change because they will not want to lose the combat arms training that they get from U.S. forces. Additionally, the AFP will not want to share training with multinational forces. They are likely to regard this as a move to reduce overall security assistance. Hence, it will be important not only to engage the Philippine Minister of Defense so that the AFP understands the potential benefits from a restructured BK, but to show U.S. resolve for moving to a multinational exercise incorporating military and civilian forces responding to a complex natural disaster. To alleviate the AFP's concerns about a

reshaped BK, it could be offered that BK, as a natural disaster exercise, could occur every other year in an effort to preserve valuable force on force staff training and combat arms field training. Therefore, BK would alternate from one year to the next between a major combat operations scenario and a complex natural disaster scenario.

Military/NGO Relationships during Complex Disasters

The second step in the process of creating a disaster relief exercise is to fully integrate the NGOs into the exercise program. Before one can understand how to effectively integrate NGOs and the military, one must first understand who they are, how they receive financial support, what makes their charters different from military forces, and why they are important to the military.

Non-Governmental Organizations are private, self governing, not-for-profit organizations dedicated to alleviating human suffering; and/or promoting education, health care, economic development, environmental protection, human rights, and conflict resolution; and/or encouraging the establishment of democratic institutions and civil society.²⁴ There are about 16,000 NGOs worldwide operating in all areas of the globe.²⁵ There is no single civilian agency responsible for the command and control of all NGOs. They each differ greatly in how they are organized and resourced, but all share a common goal of providing for the common good of mankind. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) contributes as much as 80 percent of the funding for major U.S. NGOs.²⁶ Other NGOs receive money from international organizations or private donors. Whatever the source, NGOs rely on financial support to perform their relief missions. NGOs differ from military forces in the following ways:

- The military is focused on interests of national security while NGOs are focused on humanitarian relief.
- The military is accountable in a central command fashion. NGOs are only accountable to their donors and do not subscribe to a national or international registry.
- The military is an instrument of force that relies on quick entry, violent action, and withdrawal. NGOs rely on relationship-building and cultural awareness to create long-term relationships based on trust and goodwill.
- During disaster relief operations, the military focuses on short-term recovery, local security, stability through the return of basic resources, and handover responsibilities to the local authorities. NGOs are long term-focused and will stay well after a military is gone.

- NGOs do not have a common understanding of military policies and procedures regarding logistical support requests.

Based on their vast knowledge of the local communities, NGOs are critical to the successful execution of the military commander's disaster relief plan. They assist in providing objective assessments of the pre-disaster area and provide a keen understanding of the cultural nuances of the region. NGOs are also experts in the field of crisis management. Many NGOs respond to complex emergencies as the primary focus of their organizations. They are unique, compared to the military, in that many NGOs have existing assessments of the population, geography, population, and infrastructure of a disaster area and are quick to open dialogue with the locally-affected community. Their relationships with the population are built on years of engagement and assistance. Unlike the U.S. military, which generally departs once the crisis situation is in hand, NGOs build relationships with locals that last well after the relief effort winds down. For these reasons, it is important for military commanders to understand, appreciate, and utilize the unique capabilities of NGOs which compliment the military effort. For example, initial estimates of the loss of life and property during the tsunami were provided to the military by NGOs working through the CMOCs at the regional relief sites. This information was vital to the military relief effort because it gave commanders a baseline of information to begin the planning and focus of relief efforts.

In order to properly leverage the contributions of NGOs, military leaders must adopt a change in their traditional operational leadership style. Leaders must cultivate working relationships with NGOs, encourage NGO involvement in planning and execution of relief missions, and assist in providing the available resources that NGOs need to fulfill their requirements.

Military commanders must also realize that not all NGOs are alike and, consequently, must be flexible in their working relationship with them. For instance, some NGOs choose to actively engage the military in order to leverage each other's capabilities. Others choose to distance themselves from the military because of their perceived views of the military as having a less-than-honorable agenda focused largely on access and information collection. Some NGOs choose to limit contact with government agencies in order to remain politically disinterested and unbiased. In particular, contact with the U.S. military may be seen as a conflict of interest. Other NGOs have political or religious agendas attached to their relief missions. The diversity of NGOs requires military commanders to reach out to NGOs and seek those who are interested in creating a partnership of support. NGOs that join with the military soon learn the fundamental differences between the organizations and readily share procedures

and protocols for support requests. In the long run, although NGOs and the military serve one common focus, each has unique agenda that support the greater good of its organization.

While some NGOs are not suited to work closely with military forces, they do contribute to the overall relief effort. Similarly, while some NGOs may work well with the military, they do not serve the critical needs of the effected nation. It is important that the military not be seen supporting NGOs that do not have the acceptance of the host nation. Case in point, during the 2004 Pacific tsunami, religious issues were raised regarding certain foreign NGOs with some Christian groups accused of attempts to place Muslim orphans with Christian families abroad. If CSF-536 had been perceived to be supporting such organizations, it could have had irreconcilable results for the military relief effort. Despite concerns about the motives of certain NGOs, foreign NGOs in general were seen in a more favorable light than local groups. Medical NGOs representing multinational agencies, for example, were viewed by local villagers as vital to sustaining life. They were viewed as disinterested in political affairs, dedicated to health care, and unlikely to show a bias toward any village. Among the foreign NGOs and other organizations cited as being most widely appreciated were the International Organization for Migration, the United Nations, the Red Cross/Red Crescent, Oxfam, Mercy Corps, and Save the Children.²⁷ Based on these lessons, it is important to ensure that information on NGOs is vetted throughout the command before any relationships are established. For example, USAID could serve as the U.S. government agency to assist in determining which NGOs should be brought into a combatant command's training program. USAID is the U.S. governments conduit to NGOs and, therefore, understands which organizations are the best suited to work with the military.

When military forces are called upon to respond to a complex natural disaster, they will working closely with NGOs in a variety of capacities. As a result, military forces frequently are placed in a supportive role often, filling in where needed rather than in command of the entire operation. By understanding the gap-filling role, military leaders can in turn be much more deliberate in selecting the force to be initially deployed.²⁸ The military and NGOs are enabling forces for each other. Each comes to the disaster with a variety of skills and resources. Each is working toward the common goal of recovery, relief, and restoration of basic commodities to a disaster area. Militaries often provide the physical security at the disaster site which NGOs require in order to perform humanitarian relief. Militaries also provide the valuable resource of air and ground transportation that enables NGOs to deliver humanitarian relief.

Over the past two decades, NGOs and militaries have found themselves operating in the same geographic areas while sharing the same common interest of providing urgent aid. In the

past, military commanders have regarded NGOs as freelance humanitarians without structure or oversight. Likewise, NGOs have regarded the U.S. military as resource-rich, but slow to respond to emergencies due to bureaucratic regulations. The Pacific tsunami of 2004 tested the relationships between military forces and NGOs. The Combined Support Force created a multinational team to bring together supporting nations and relief organizations. In this capacity, NGOs and the U.S. military depended on each other for site assessments, security, and logistics. Military forces and NGOs worked together in remote locations often combining resources to provide disaster relief. However, military forces and NGOs were not prepared for the complex challenges associated with merging interests and resources. This disaster highlighted how the U.S. military, government agencies, and NGOs worked interdependent while sharing the same space. The working relationships between NGOs and the U.S. military made significant strides towards breaking down the stereotypes each held. However, an obstacle to fully synchronized relief efforts remains the lack of understanding of each others capabilities and limitations.

As the tsunami relief demonstrated, the sharing of knowledge and development of personal relationships between the military and NGOs is critical to successful humanitarian support efforts. The military needs experts who understand civil relief organizations and their strategies for success. NGOs need experts on military capabilities and procedures. Cross-training on the part of both organizations can only lead to a common understanding of strategies, policies, and procedures which ultimately will result in a shorter response time and, thus saved lives.

The Disaster Relief Workshop

The third and final step to creating an all encompassing natural disaster program in USPACOM is the closing of the previously identified gaps between military and civilian organizations that respond to a disaster. In order to break down the cultural and educational barriers between military and civilian organizations, it is necessary to create a pre-exercise Disaster Relief Workshop (DRW) for the purposes of sharing relief procedures and building working relationships. The overall goal of the DRW would be to create a military-civilian team prior to participation in disaster relief exercises and, ultimately, prior to an actual complex natural disaster.

The key to an effective DRW is bringing together an international disaster relief “Team of Teams.” The DRW must be hosted by the U.S. military and must include multinational military partners, government agencies, international relief organizations, and NGOs. The DRW will

provide the foundational tools for the understanding and implementation of the participant procedures by allowing military and civilian leaders to teach other disaster responders about the multiple facets of their organizations. The DRW will be a critical multicultural educational tool that will carry over into the disaster relief exercise. Additionally, attendance at a DRW would serve as the entry point for military and civilian organizations to come together, share relief procedures, and participate in future complex natural disaster relief exercises. At the completion of the DRW, military and civilian relief workers will have a better understanding of each others working protocols and will be prepared to work together in future disaster relief efforts.

An example of an effective DRW is the post-tsunami lessons learned conference held in Chang Ma, Thailand, in 2005. International militaries and civilian relief organizations came together for a 5-day Pacific tsunami after action review dedicated to sharing and teaching others organizational principles, practices, and lessons learned. The conference was hosted by USPACOM and focused on building relationships between Pacific-region militaries, agencies and international relief organizations in preparation for the next complex disaster. During the conference, military participants shared the procedures for requesting support from a CMOC, and NGOs discussed communication capabilities, transportation challenges, cultural barriers between military and civilian groups, and many other facets of disaster relief. All organizations attending the workshop agreed that better communication and education across cultures and commands would improve response time following a major disaster.²⁹ The relationships formed at the 2005 DRW were a strong investment in preparation for future disaster relief efforts. Unfortunately, the 2005 DRW in Thailand has not been repeated. The concept for a DRW must be formalized and tied to the proposed exercise schedule.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the occurrence of the 2004 Pacific tsunami demonstrated the speed of response and commitment of military and civilian organizations to put aside differences and work toward relieving human suffering. This emergency also highlighted the need for training that not only prepares militaries and NGOs for an impending complex natural disaster, but improves working relationships between regional militaries and NGOs. On 7 March 2006, Admiral William J. Fallon, Commander, USPACOM, testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee saying "... to effectively employ resources and build upon the lessons learned and teamwork from tsunami relief [Operation Unified Assistance], we hope to include NGOs in support of our operational and humanitarian goals."³⁰

In order to meet the commander's intent, the combatant command exercise program must reflect his vision. This can be achieved by: (1) reshaping Exercise Balikatan from a bilateral exercise to a multinational one focused on a complex natural disaster, (2) integrating NGOs into the planning and execution of the overall exercise program, and (3) establishing a pre-exercise disaster relief workshop for the purposes of sharing relief efforts and building relationships between military forces and civilian relief organizations.

Endnotes

¹ The term "complex natural disaster" has various meanings depending upon the context of its use. For the purpose of this paper, complex natural disaster refers to any natural disaster (emergency) that impacts over 10,000 people, destroys a major city/structure, and weakens the economy of one or more nations.

² Peter Long, USPACOM Operation Unified Assistance After Action Review, "PACOM Operations in an Unclassified Environment," USPACOM Briefing, Camp Smith, HI, 15 January 2005.

³ U.S. Pacific Command, *Theatre Security Cooperation Plan*, (Camp Smith: U.S. Pacific Command, 31 March 2005).

⁴ *Ibid.*, 2-6.

⁵ Rand Corporation, "The Army and the New National Security Strategy," available from www.rand.org/pubs/reserch_briefs/RB3040; Internet; accessed on 11 February 2007.

⁶ *United States Geological Survey Website*, available from <http://pubs.usgs.gov/publications/text/fire.html>; Internet; accessed 23 January 2007.

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